

- 10 Eine genaue Analyse der Szenen findet sich bei Angermüller, a. a. O., Bd. 2, 2.
- 11 Wie oft zu lesen ist, soll Salieri das Stück wegen seiner fortschrittlichen Ideen nicht vertont haben, jedoch konnte ich kürzlich das falsch katalogisierte Stück in der Musikabteilung der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek (Sign.: S. m. 4526) identifizieren.
- 12 Die Melodie ist bis heute verschollen.

Sol Babitz

MODERN ERRORS IN BEETHOVEN PERFORMANCE

The music of Beethoven is not generally considered to present problems of interpretation in the sense of a Bach and this is reflected in the paucity of writings on the subject. However, there have occurred many changes in the idiomatic conventions of performance in the 150 years since Beethoven's death and there is a definite need for rethinking this subject in the light of such neglected sources as Türk's "Klavierschule" (1805), and Baillot's "l'Art du Violon" (1832). Beethoven today is considered primarily a Schillerian, revolutionary predecessor of Wagner; however there is another equally important side - the eighteenth-century side. Beethoven was a follower of C. P. E. Bach and Haydn and the neglect of this side has led to performances which are excessively "Promethean".

Today Beethoven suffers from two Wagnerian excesses: the "long-line" and the liberation from the "tyranny of the bar-line". Since the "long-line" was invented by Wagner and since most of Beethoven's contemporaries advocated bar-line accents (Liszt was the first to object to them) one can say that the smooth, non-accented Beethoven performance is not historically justified. In tone-production there has also been a great change: a "big-tone" is today considered the prime requisite for success - this however was not always so. The use of the old hand-wrist control in violin-bowing and keyboard playing rendered the modern kind of tone impossible while the arm-shoulder impulse needed for the modern tone renders impossible many of the subtleties which are needed for the presentation of the old accents, etc. The recordings of the examples which illustrate this paper are performed by members of the Early Music Laboratory who have undergone extensive self-reeducation in technique and style. In every case there are basic differences between the new and old.

Summary of Differences between the Styles of Beethoven, Mozart & Today

1. Articulation (Ex. I.). Beethoven considered Mozart's keyboard-playing to be "too choppy". This is an indication that he must have played in a somewhat broader style. However, compared to the present Wagnerian "long-line" Beethoven's articulation would be considered too broken and "choppy".
2. Metric Accents (Ex. II A.). Beethoven's articulation being a little broader than that of Mozart his music would need proportionately less metric accents since these are needed to hold together the line broken with silences. Despite Beethoven's lesser accents his performance was nevertheless infinitely more accented than that of the modern performance. The manner in which Beethoven's music is distorted by the modern lack of accents is demonstrated in Ex. IIA.
3. Rubato. Beethoven, especially in later life, was reputed to have used a "true rubato", whereas Mozart, in a letter, said that his performance, while free in the right hand was strict in the left. Such freedoms are rarely heard in either composer.

4. Tone-Production. Beethoven's instrument and technique were on a slightly larger scale than that of Mozart, and while Beethoven's Broadwood was more powerful than Mozart's Stein both were light-years weaker than instruments of today. Instrumental and vocal techniques were likewise on a vastly smaller scale.
5. Expressive dynamics. The effect of a "big-tone" is today obtained largely by playing mezzo forte those passages which were marked pianissimo. This intensity renders difficult the "empfindsame" dynamic contrasts. The old exploding *sf* is rare today because its effect is possible only when surrounded by a weak tone. Today one rarely hears the contrasts exemplified by Beethoven when he directed *p* by crouching and *ff* by leaping up.

MUSICAL EXAMPLES. Ex. I: ARTICULATION SILENCES

In Ex. IA the dynamics in line (a) show the note-separation indicated in Beethoven's notation whereas line (b) shows the modern "long-line" phrasing. Some modern performers justify this slurring on the ground that Beethoven was sometimes careless in his notation. Beethoven was inaccurate less than 2% of the time and for this reason his slurs should be carefully observed. When he wanted a long line he occasionally wrote slurs over many notes and even measures; however when notes were written separated - they should sound separated, according to Türk and others. The * in all the following examples indicate the presence of separating silences which modern performers usually connect. The dynamics also show how metric accents are brought out and the S and W indicate the strong and weak measures - not always as simple as those shown here. The smooth crescendo to a high point did not exist in the past when the crescendo was broken with silences *.

(A)

Early (a) silences etc.

Modern (b) cresc. to high point no silences

Modern performers usually slur after trills (Ex. IB), over the bar-line (IC) and blur the note-separation with the pedal (ID).

(B)

Early silence

Modern no silence

(C)

(D)

Bülow, in his edition, prefers the dynamics suggested by Wagner (IE) as being "More delicate" (!) than those written by Beethoven.

(E)

Beethoven:

Wagner - Bülow:

Ex. II: METRIC ACCENTS

Column a shows the sound of the music when played in the modern accentless style - column b gives the original text with metric accents in brackets. In each case the listener hears the first note as a wrong down-beat. The bar-line accent in Ex. II B creates an interesting stressing of the seventh, whereas in the modern version the ear hears the consonants as main beats.

a - Modern Sound

b - Beethoven's Text

(A) Allegro con brio $\text{♩} = 108$

(B) Solo

(C) Fuga

(D)

In the following example the modern sound can be avoided only by following the instruction to make the bar-line sforzato truly explosive.

(E)

Ex. III: MELISMATIC ACCENTS - RHYTHMIC ALTERATION

In melismatic passages, when Beethoven wanted all of the notes played as one group he wrote one beam for the notes; however when he wrote several beams and/or slurs that indicated the passage was to be broken into several groups with accents. Ex. A shows the original phrasing above the staff while Ex. B shows how Beethoven changes a hemiola from six to three. The use of Türk's 321 fingering will enhance this passage - the modern performance does not make this clear.



Beethoven's original fingering, above the staff, (C) indicates the "pearling" *leggiero* style which stems from the 18th-century fingering in pairs. Here it is easiest, and sounds best if the ratio of the 1-3 finger is short-long. Played as-written it does not sound "*leggieramente*" but merely legato. Not until 1824 did Beethoven suggest to Czerny that his nephew be taught to use "all fingers".



Ex. IV: VIOLIN PROBLEMS

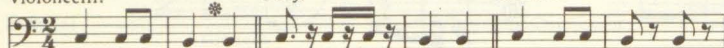
Modern violinists usually play slurs with dots staccato, whereas Baillot does this only for fast notes. On repeated notes, he, like L. Mozart has a broad portato (A) while elsewhere (B) gives the note "almost all of its value" thus enabling Beethoven's phrasing to be heard whereas modern separation makes all notes sound alike.

(A) Allegretto (♩ = 76)

Violoncelli:

Perf.

Modern



Early sound:

Modern sound:

(B) Andante cantabile ♩ = 100

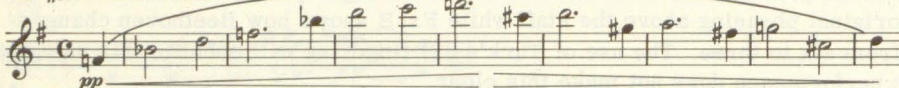


18th-century
slight pressure'

Modern sound

Because of the fast modern bow-stroke the following is invariably performed with several bow-strokes; however when Beethoven wrote long slurs it was for the purpose of creating an intense, soft sound which, according to Baillot and W. Gardiner ("Music of Nature", 1832, 118) was needed in the music of Beethoven.

(C) "Emotionally" "Accent Penetrant"



Other things missing in Beethoven performances today are the swelled syncopations described by Baillot (1834) and Campagnoli (1751-1827) and the "light delicate articulation" which Baillot cited in his book in the following manner:

Ⓓ Allegro ma non troppo



Because the "big-tone" requires a full bow-stroke on the quarter-note (Ex. IE) the bow must be reversed here thus rendering impossible the use of the stronger downstroke as described by L. Mozart and Türk (Ex. F) Ex. IV G shows how Beethoven's bow makes a crescendo by using less bow whereas the modern performer must use more. The silence at the asterisks indicates where Beethoven's phrasing breaks whereas the modern long line makes everything alike.



Baillot's examples of vibrato show that it was used less than 50% of the time - mainly on long notes - rarely on long notes ending phrases. Today it is used almost 100 % of the time.

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PROBLEME EINER DOKUMENTAR-BIOGRAPHIE BEETHOVENS

Ein internationaler Kongreß in Bonn im Beethoven-Jahr 1970 sollte - meine ich - nicht vorübergehen, ohne daß auf die Nützlichkeit, ja Notwendigkeit einer Dokumentar-Biographie Beethovens nach dem Muster der Biographien von Otto Erich Deutsch hingewiesen wird. Deutsch selbst hatte sich in seinem Leben mehrfach mit diesem Projekt beschäftigt. Vor nun fast einem Jahrzehnt war es wohl das letzte Mal, daß er ernstlich an die Ausführung eines solchen Planes dachte und zu diesem Zweck mehrfach Gespräche auf internationaler Ebene führte. Zu dieser Zeit allerdings wußte er bereits, daß er selbst nicht mehr genug Muße und Kraft aufbringen würde, um zusätzlich zu seinen Mozart- und Schubert-Forschungsarbeiten ein solches Beethoven-Buch schreiben zu können. Damals trat er mit der Frage auch an mich heran, ob ich Interesse an einer solchen Aufgabe hätte. Ich mußte leider antworten, daß mir die Möglichkeit, mich ihr gebührend zu widmen, fehle. Denn so gerne ich unter seiner Leitung ein solches Projekt begonnen hätte, war mir doch sofort klar, daß es jahrzehntelanger ausschließlicher und aufopfernder Bemühungen bedürfe, um dieses Unternehmen nicht nur zu beginnen, sondern auch womöglich eines Tages zu einem Abschluß zu bringen. Soll dies Werk von gleicher Zuverlässigkeit und Vollständigkeit werden wie die bekannten Dokumentarbiographien Schuberts und Mozarts, oder zumindest ähnlich verdienstvoll wie die Händels, die Deutsch zusammenstellte, so wird die Beethoven-Publikation diese Werke selbstverständlich an Umfang weit überschreiten, auch wenn man - wie im Falle der Mozart-Dokumente - die Briefe nicht mitveröffentlicht, sondern nur jene in den Briefen berührten Ereignisse, die nicht anderweitig dokumentarisch belegt werden können, chronologisch eingeordnet erwähnt.